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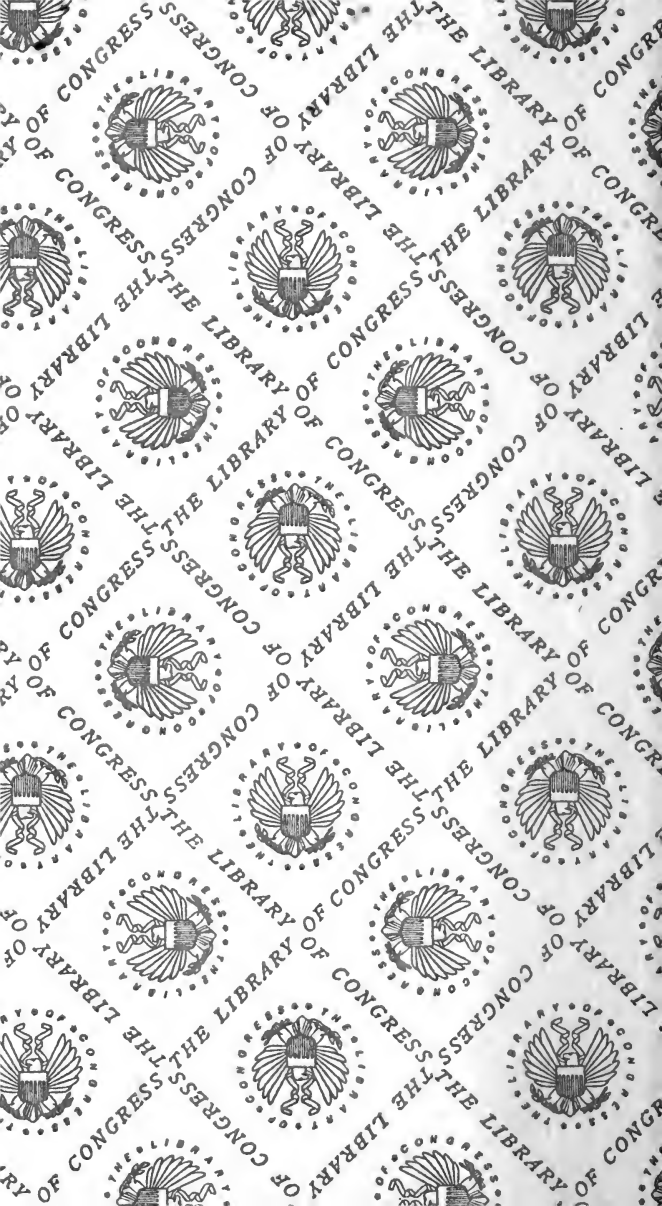
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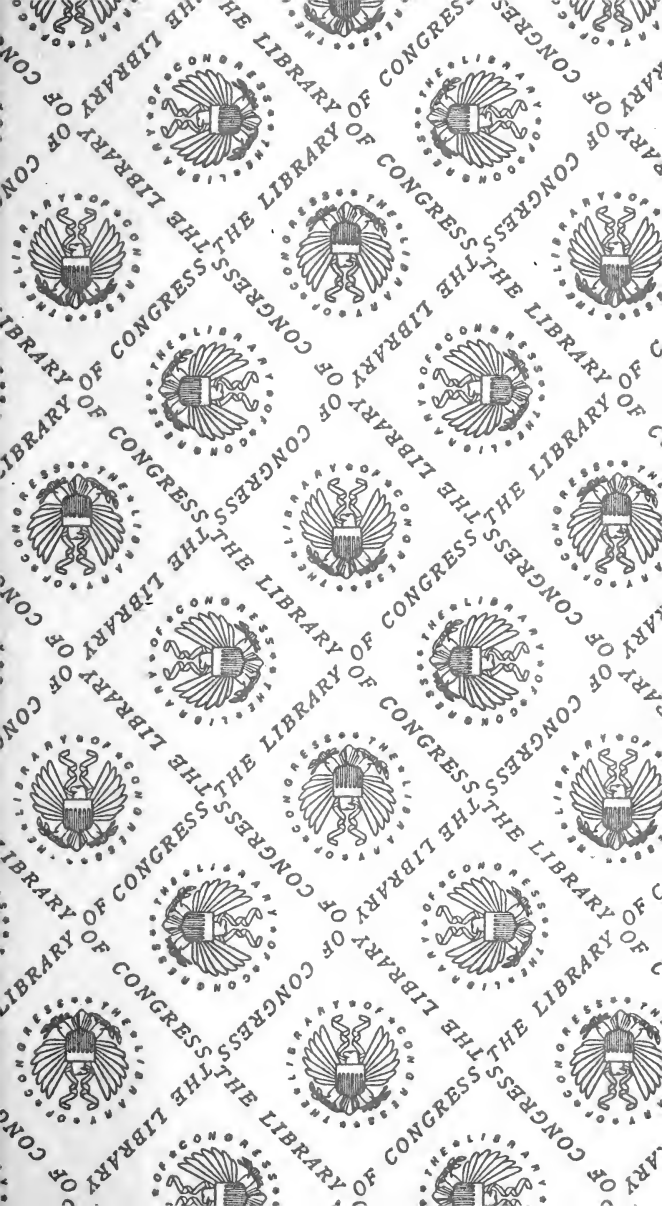
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ADDRESS

ON THE

SERVICES OF WASHINGTON,

BEFORE THE

SCHOOL CHILDREN OF BOSTON,

IN THE

OLD SOUTH MEETING HOUSE.

22 FEBRUARY 1886.

BY

WILLIAM EVERETT.

BOSTON:

ROBERTS BROTHERS,

1886.

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2011



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MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOR: Fellow Citizens, Young and Old—When Boston celebrates Washington's Birthday in the Old South, it is natural to think of that winter long ago when Washington himself passed his birthday within cannon shot of the Old South, one might say. One hundred and ten years ago this day, the 22d of February, was kept by Washington in the old headquarters at Cambridge, chafing at the want of artillery that delayed his driving the English out of Boston. This house, as I trust every boy and girl here knows, was a riding school for the British troopers, who found it easier to exercise their horses in the Old South than to get hay and corn for them, with the rebel parties scouring every meadow and island, and carrying off the fodder by stacks. There is no record, so far as I am aware, of any extraordinary flood near Boston in the second week of February, 1776, though perhaps it would not have done so much harm if there had been, as people then did not think of living in the swamps and gullies into which they now crowd, and it would have been justly thought absurd and impious to turn the oozy flats west of the Common into streets and houses. But we do know that it was an open

and warm season. "Everything thaws here but Old Put," says a letter written in those days. Old Put was full of a plan to march straight across those same Back Bay flats, when they were frozen, as he thought they ought to have been in the month of February; but they remained obstinately open, and the old hero of the wolf's den was frozen and crusty in proportion. By the 4th of March, which is sure to be a cold day for somebody, the ground was again frozen solid, and the hard frost added no little to the difficulty experienced by Washington in fortifying Dorchester Heights for the final assault.

The preparations for that assault were actively going on all this third week of February. It was, I think, on this very day that General Knox succeeded in completing the transport of his siege guns all across the State, from the forts on Lake Champlain—no trifling feat even now with our railroads, and a portentous task on the winter roads of that day. The hay which the poor horses in the Old South missed so sadly was packing into enormous fascines for the siege works on the heights. Manly, by his daring capture at sea, had at last secured an abundance of powder; Gridley and Thomas, and Rufus Putnam, the pioneer of Ohio, were working on all details of the final storm. And it must have been almost exactly on the anniversary of Washington's Birthday that he began the actual putting into operation those plans which culminated on the anniversary of the

Boston massacre, eleven days later, with the fatal seizure of the heights.

In about a fortnight more the English were driven from Boston, and Washington went in triumphal procession along the Neck, and into this building to see and mourn over the ravages of the brutal troopers.

Our street, afterwards named for him, was then known as Orange street from the narrowest part, not far from Union Park, to Essex street; as Newbury street to West street; as Marlborough street to School street; and as Cornhill to its termination in Dock square. These names remained well into this century; but it did not need the change to the name of Washington to stamp his memory on every stone in these streets, every brick in this ancient meeting-house and in all the buildings of Boston, every wharf that projects into our harbor, every tree that waves on the Common, every hearthstone that glows with domestic comfort, every dome and spire that courts the sun. Boston itself, which he conquered for its own people, which he saved from the fires of its spiteful garrison,—Boston, which always loved him, always honored him, always fought with him and for him, always revered and mourned him,—is a monument in every foot of her territory to him, her darling chief, her sainted guide, as pure and as single as the stately obelisk that towers at the city of his name on the banks of his own river.

His birthday will be celebrated in many ways throughout the United States to-day; but this celebration, I understand, is to keep his name alive in the hearts of young people — to tell them why we give an entire holiday, not to any great battle or great event like Bunker Hill or the Declaration, but to a man: the only man, as far as I know, on whose birthday an entire nation now openly stops its work and gives way to grateful memories.

When I was a boy, the age of many of you, I was tired, not to say sick, of hearing about Washington. It seemed to me that every book which they gave me about the country, every history, every reader, every speaker talked about him incessantly, as if there was no one else in the world, as if his was the only name worth mentioning. And yet it seemed to me it was only a name; they were always talking about his character, as if it was something one had never seen before; they praised it in the same words over and over again; and yet they did not seem to tell me about anything particular that he did or said. I found his life terribly dull to read; I could not remember it, as I could the lives of other men; and I turned away tired and weary of Washington's name, to find in other biographies and other histories the stories of men whom I seemed to feel were more real and nearer to my heart.

I think this weariness came partly from the books which were written about Washington.

The standard lives of him, on which the children's books were based, were written by men who honored him and loved him, who wanted to preserve every scrap of real knowledge about him, and make a life as truthful as he was himself. They consequently threw away a great deal of trash in the way of impossible feats and sayings that had been invented about him, and determined to tell nothing but the truth; but they threw away also the real life of the man. They did what a great many authors did about fifty years ago — in order to make books that nobody could find fault with, they made books that nobody could care about; and consequently they left on my mind just exactly that idea about Washington,—that he was a man that nobody could find fault with, but that nobody could care about. That was the way I felt as a boy.

It was just thirty years ago this day that I heard an oration about Washington which set me thinking, as it did thousands of other Americans, what it could be that had made the whole country pick him out as such a man above other men; why the men who saw him during the sixty-seven years of his life, and their sons to whom they told his story, thought of him as they never thought of any other man. I began noting down everything I could learn about what the man actually had been in the time when he lived; I compared him with other men who had done great things; and very soon I found out why every one who

5/ talked about him had spoken of his character. I found out that the things he said and did, although many of them were really great things, yet seemed almost nothing, besides the man himself. There was something — there is something — about him that not only made the things great wherein he succeeded, but the very things wherein he failed more honorable — and even glorious — than the successes of other men. I soon saw that the men of his own time put confidence in him, entirely independent of whether he succeeded or failed, as people commonly talk of success or failure. I found out that when all he had to show for the men and money and power which he had received, was a thinned, discontented, defeated army, that was held to be only a reason for giving him more power — for giving him absolute power — that he might make the army strong and victorious. And so, as I read on, I became convinced that the whole man, his entire life, his united purposes, his unchangeable spirit, his character, in short, was something greater and stronger than other men, who might perhaps have done or said one thing, or half a dozen things, more striking than anything he could do.

And so, my dear boys and girls, it began to dawn upon me what it was that made Washington spoken of as I had found him. The men who had known him and the men to whom they had talked of him spoke of him in simple words of

praise and trust for his greatness and goodness, without going into particulars, as they would about other men, because he was all great and good. When you talk about wealth and treasure; when you count up all the thousand beautiful and useful and precious things in Boston; when you tell of the riches and the labor and the study and the invention that they need to produce their monstrous masses, their convenient appliances, their beautiful shapes, their gorgeous colors, you do not count in this air that is playing through our lungs, and this light that is streaming from heaven. These are not called valuable, because they are priceless. They are not a part of our wealth or a help to our living, because they are wealth and life itself; you cannot describe them — you cannot even see the air or touch the light; but the air and light are above and beyond and within everything. So I found out it was with America in the last forty years of the century; she had brave soldiers, skilful generals, wise statesmen, eloquent orators, cunning inventors, bold seamen; but behind and beyond and above them all she had this man, whose manhood, whose mere existence, helped to make the manhood and life of others, and was worth more than all that the best of them said and did.

And so boys and girls, I learned to feel as those men felt. I learned to honor and love that man above every great man I read of; I learned to feel it was right he should be singled out as

the man of men, to have his birthday celebrated among all our great and glorious days till the end of time. I should like to make you feel as I feel; I should like to give you, if you have not got it, something of the notion of what it is to be simply a great man, and not merely great in some one thing. I shall try to do so; and I think it will do no harm if I first run over to you what the great events of his life were, and it would be an excellent plan for you to learn them by heart. Learning names and dates and events by heart is in itself a good thing, though some people who don't know them, or are too lazy to know them, pretend it is not.

George Washington was born in Westmoreland, Virginia, on the 22d of February, 1732, though people were eleven days behind then, so they called it only the 11th. His father, Augustine Washington, was a worthy Virginia planter, who died when George was quite young, and left the family to his mother's care. This lady, whose name had been Mary Ball, was, I am afraid, a pretty stern person, and brought up George in what was even then a very strict and unyielding way. His own brother Lawrence had made the acquaintance of Admiral Vernon, a very distinguished naval officer, and when he built a new house higher up the Potomac, named it Mt. Vernon. George was very near entering the English Navy in consequence of this friendship. He grew up unusually tall, strong and handsome,



very fond of out-door sports, especially fox hunting, and was naturally of a fiery temper, which he managed to keep in control in a way I fear very few of us ever do. Whenever I hear of a boy, or for that matter of a man either, who excuses himself for something wrong because he was made so, I think of Washington's temper, and how he made himself the most even of men. George was not in a way to get a great deal of schooling; but as far as he could he educated himself to be a surveyor, and in that profession acquired a great knowledge of the wild land and mountains and rivers, and not a little of the wild men to the west of the Virginia settlements. In 1751 he entered the militia and studied everything he could on the art of war. In 1752 his brother died, and George succeeded to the family estate. Toward the end of the same year he was sent by the governor of Virginia on a very dangerous expedition, to the extreme frontier settlements on the Monongahela and Alleghany, to see if there was any truth in the report that the French and Indians were preparing war against the colonies. In the return he was in imminent danger of losing his life, first by his Indian guide's treachery, and then by the flood and ice of the Alleghany. The next year, when war was actually at hand, he was sent to construct a frontier post near where Pittsburg now stands, which he called Fort Necessity. He was soon attacked, and obliged to surrender on the 4th of July, just twenty-two

years before the great declaration, leading his little force back with the utmost prudence and courage. In almost exactly a year he accompanied General Braddock to the same spot, and escaped from the disgraceful carnage without a wound, although a constant mark for the Indian bullets. In consequence of the disputes between officers of troops raised in the colonies and those who had come over from England, he soon withdrew from the army; but he became a very important member of the Virginia Legislature. When the war for the rights of the Colonies broke out, in 1775, he was made commander-in-chief. He drove Sir William Howe from Boston in March, 1776. Later in the year he was defeated at Long Island, and at White Plains, retreating into New Jersey; just as the old year was passing into the new, he won the victories of Trenton and Princeton; he was defeated successively at the Brandywine and Germantown, 1777, and ended the year in the winter quarters of Valley Forge, near Philadelphia, in terrible suffering. He fought the battle of Monmouth in 1778, which would have been a brilliant victory but for the treachery of Charles Lee. He narrowly escaped being captured at West Point, by the treachery of Arnold, 1780. With the help of the French allies he forced Lord Cornwallis to surrender in 1781. In 1784 he laid down his commission and retired wholly to private life. In 1787 he was president of the convention that formed the Constitution

of the United States; was chosen the first President after it had been adopted, and inaugurated on the 30th of April, 1789; served for two terms as President, and peremptorily refusing a third term, issued his farewell address to the people in 1796. The next year war broke out with France. He was called from his retirement and made lieutenant-general in 1798, and on the 14th of December, 1799, he died of a neglected cold, at the age of not quite sixty-eight years.

These are the great events—the great landmarks in his life. For what he showed himself in these years the men of his own time ranked him as a man fit to rank with the greatest men that ever lived; a name which America need never fear to present to the world when great men are spoken of, and challenge other nations, old and new, to name a greater.

What was it that made him so great? What is it that makes anybody great? What are great men? You might define the word in twenty different ways; and, as it seems to me, a great deal of time has been wasted in cautioning boys and girls not to get mistaken ideas of greatness. When I was a boy, there used to be a debate printed for boys to speak on the question whether Julius Cæsar was or was not a great man; you can find it in the old reading books, and a very rambling and profitless debate it is. There are all sorts of great men; and every one of us will have some favorite, who we have been taught to think, or

have taught ourselves to think, is the greatest of the great. But I understand a great man to be one who leaves the world different from what he found it. He has stamped the seal of his name upon history, so that men must read it carelessly if they pass him by. The ways in which men are great are countless; and some persons have their eyes so fixed upon one kind of greatness or another that they are surprised to learn that there have been great men whom they never heard of, and cannot believe they really are great. I am going to name to you a dozen men, born within a very few years of Washington, every one of whom changed the world, so that either in his own lifetime, or after his death, men could not and cannot now do their own work, without stopping to think what these great masters did before them, and learning of them, just as you learn of your teachers now. I shall scarcely go out of England in my list, and I shall name nobody that Washington might not easily have known if he had been so inclined.

In that same year, 1732, which brought Washington into the world, was born Warren Hastings, the great governor of India, who fixed the empire of England over the Hindoos, with a head as clear as crystal, but a hand and heart, I am afraid, as hard as iron. In the same year were born Lord Kenyon and Lord Thurlow, who were two of the very greatest lawyers and judges of their time, and rose together to be Chief Justice

and Chancellor of England. In the same year, 1732, was born Joseph Haydn, the great musical composer, the author of the "Seasons" and the "Creation," whose strains are as sweet and as heavenly now as they were a hundred years ago. In 1731, the year before Washington, was born William Cowper, the inspired poet, the author of the "Task" and of "John Gilpin," who raised poetry almost from the grave in England with his manly, tender, lofty verses, never written for any but a good end. In that same year of 1731, was born Henry Cavendish, the great chemist, the discoverer of the composition of water, who gave that marvellous science of chemistry a new impulse that it still feels. One year earlier, in 1730, was born Edmund Burke, the wise statesman, the glorious orator, whom Ireland gave to England as the model of what her great men ought to be, the friend of America, dearer even to us than to his own. One year earlier, was born James Cook, the bold navigator, who brought the islands of the Pacific out of the darkness of ages; as kind and thoughtful a captain as he was an intrepid and wise navigator. Six years before Washington, was born John Howard, the lover of mankind, who travelled the length and breadth of Europe, to relieve the miseries of the prisoner. Nine years before Washington, we have Reynolds, the great painter, on whose canvas the great men and lovely women of the century live and breathe in a rich immortality. Four years after Washington, was

born, in 1736, James Watt, the mighty inventor, who seized on the spirit of the steam cloud, and chained his giant limbs for the work and service of man. In 1737 was born Edward Gibbon, the great historian, who compressed the fall of Rome, the story of fourteen centuries, into a monumental work, which all other writers must despair of surpassing. In 1738, was born William Herschel, the astronomer, who turned to the heavens a mightier telescope by far than had yet been known, and forced the remote depths of the solar system to reveal the planet Uranus, whose very existence before was scarcely known and wholly misunderstood.

Now, here I have named to you a dozen men, every one of whom did something great, — every one of whom made the world feel him; to every one of whom the world has looked up as a master. And the stamp which they put on the world has not worn away. With two exceptions, they are all valued more highly than they were in their lives. The two great lawyers I named to you, who were considered in their lifetime far more successful, far luckier, as men say, than any of the others, have much less chance of having their names permanently counted among the really great men of the world than any of the others who were their contemporaries.

Now what was it that made men count Washington in his lifetime, and makes them count him now, greater in degree, greater in kind than any

of these? He painted no pictures, he wrote no poems or histories, he sung no strains of music, he discovered no islands, no elements, no planets. He did not make men tremble before him at the Bar, nor hang on his lips in the Senate. The only man of the twelve with whom we can directly compare him is Warren Hastings, who ceased to govern India just as Washington was beginning to govern America; and the wide provinces that he ruled, the teeming millions he swayed, the vast tributes he exacted, the numerous and well-appointed troops he directed, shame into insignificance the half-clothed and feeble regiments, the scanty, the ill-paid, rather the unpaid, revenues, the scattered population of the half-explored and undeveloped country, which was all Washington had to rule. Yet it seems almost a profane insult to name in the same day with Washington the great pro-consul whose birth so nearly agreed with his own in time.

He stands higher than all these men, most of whom were as good as they were great, because his work was in itself a greater work; because the way he did it was a greater way than that in which work is often done, and because he inspired a trust in himself for what he did which made men yield themselves to him as to a superior being.

His work was the greatest that man requires. He created a nation. The time had come in the

providence of God that the United States should be no more a dependency of England, but a people by themselves, and it was he that made them so. It very, *very* rarely happens that a new nation forms itself and takes its place among those that exist already. It can only be done when they choose to recognize it and admit that it really is their sister; and in order that they may give it this recognition, there must be some proof that it is worthy of that high place. It was Washington that gave such a proof to the world. It was he, more than any one man,—more than all together,—whom America accepted as her leader, whom she presented to the world as her chosen son, the representative of her very self. It was long years before the existence of the United States, the equal and sister of every other nation, was fully established; again and again it seemed as if our self-assertion, our declaration must be premature—as if we must break down; and again and again it was Washington and Washington alone on whom we fell back as a rock from which the waves must recoil. After the defeat of White Plains in 1776, the capture of Philadelphia in 1777, the rout of Camden in 1780, the prostration of national sentiment in 1785, the insolent aggressions of France in 1793 and 1798, it did seem as if America, the last hope of constitutional liberty, must break down under one or another evil force; and every time it was the living presence of Washington that rallied the good and true all



over the world to her support, like the white plume of Henry IV, in the shock of Ivry.

This creation of a new people, this adding a new star to the cluster of the nations, is a greater thing for man than the work of Cavendish in finding two gases in water, or of Cook in finding new islands in the ocean, or of Herschel in detecting a new planet in the skies. It does not merely add a new name to the map; but it endows every man and woman within the lines where that new name is printed with a life that had not belonged to them under the old. It is a great thing whenever it is done. When Italy became a nation, men could not help sounding the name of Cavour as a great man, though many things in his career might seem artful and almost treacherous. When Germany became a nation, men could not help praising Bismarck, though much in him may seem savage and tyrannical; but both these men made a people. When a people is created, it claims for itself the glory of all other creations and discoveries which any of its children may acquire. The planet that Piazzi discovered at Palermo, the music that Bach poured forth at Eisenach have a new glory since Cavour and Bismarck created Italy and Germany. Since Washington's time, astronomers and chemists, artists and inventors, historians and poets, have sent the name of the United States far and wide through the world; but not one of all these illustrious men but feels a keener glow in his own

triumph from the thought that he is the countryman of Washington, the founder and father of his home.

But he not merely made a new nation—he made it in the interests of law and liberty. A nation may be created for no good. If a wild tribe succeeds in breaking away from wise restraint, if a tyrant succeeds in carving out an empire and giving it his own name, it is a great but an accursed deed; it is like the discovery of a new disease, or the invention of a new poison; we wish that it may prove a failure. But Washington made a new nation on the principles that popular liberty can exist with a welcome to the natives of all lands, that reverence for law can exist among a people that are working to plant and subdue a wilderness; and to find anything like what he did we must go back to the unknown and unreal ages, when Theseus is said to have united in one the scattered communities of Attica and made of them the city of Athens, the home of liberty, the refuge of the oppressed, the mother of all that was bright and beautiful in the ancient world, the never-dying model of art and eloquence and poetry.

But it was the way he did this work, the virtues that he showed while he was doing it, that made men feel that no nation ever had been so created, that no nation could have been created out of such materials by any other man. It was the far-reaching prudence that made him

calculate to the full every measure before he undertook it; it was the untiring patience which made him live and work and plan through reverse after reverse and disappointment after disappointment; it was the dauntless courage and fortitude that made him eager to attack on the slightest opening, and slow to yield under the severest pressure; it was the soaring confidence, the undying hope—that child of patience and daring combined—that made him positively incapable of the despair that bowed others to the dust; it was the absolute unselfishness and generosity that prevented him, a score of times, from drawing to himself precisely the advantages that have corrupted one conqueror after another, while he saw, not only without a murmur, but with the utmost cordiality, brilliant prizes assigned to others; it was the unflinching devotion to right and duty, the stern rebuke of anything like wrong, the absolute reliance on God and reference to his will, which lifted him up to a higher level than most of us reach, and caused men to look to his words and his very thoughts as those of the inspired of the Lord.

Of these qualities, two seem to me most exceptional and wonderful, the sort of qualities that one wants in a hero, in the man whom you pick out to be your own favorite. —First, is that wonderful quality of hope—a child, as I say, of daring and patience—which is never satisfied with failure, which never gives up a cause, which

is ready to look forward a thousand times after the world says there is nothing ahead. Hope is a virtue; hope is a duty; it is a guiding principle in our religion, wherein the teaching of Christ differs from that of those strange people called philosophers, ancient or modern, in that it commands us to desire, to anticipate, to claim a future of success and happiness as the reward of duty. I cannot tell you how I despise the opposite philosophy, the doctrine of acquiescence, which believes that we ought to accept failures as our proper portion, and mould ourselves to destiny; still more, how hateful to me is that belief, which has great names to sanction it, if anything could sanction it, that sometimes the best thing we could do is to try no longer, but to give up hope itself as a failure. Yet this last, meanest, most detestable belief is spreading. I cannot take up a paper now but I see the spread of this miserable, cowardly delusion of suicide. Every day I read of some man or woman or boy—thank Heaven! I scarcely ever see the news told of a girl—who decides that life is not worth living, and accordingly destroys what God gave to be used under his laws. It is a special sin of our times, as it has been of certain times before, this silly cowardice, this wanton wickedness, that cannot see God's sun shining behind the darkest cloud. I do not desire to spend many words over a sin which has sent grief and horror into the hearts of hundreds of parents; but I call on every

boy and girl here, who fancies life is hard, and men cruel, and God forgetful, to turn to the story of Washington, and see how, under the most crushing blows, defeat, ingratitude, treachery, he not only never lost patience and courage, but maintained a lively hope, that carried him through triumphant, when all else despaired; and let them learn that to give up is a sin, and suicide as wicked as murder.

And scarcely less equal to this is his generosity; his utter unselfishness, that seemed incapable of thinking what personal distinction might be. I might give a score of instances, but the most striking was when Burgoyne was pressing down on us from the north, and all decency urged that the direction of affairs against him should be in Washington's hands. His enemies in Congress contrived to give the command to others. The battle of Saratoga followed, a brilliant and triumphant success, in contrast to all Washington's defeats. He never murmured; he received the victory with rejoicing and pride, even though the credit was given, not to Schuyler, whose talent had planned it—not to Arnold, whose courage had won it, but to Gates,—the vainest, the most trifling, the most incompetent of men.

But yet some men know all this about Washington, the heroic work which he did, the saintly way in which he did it, yet think he was not a great man of the highest kind—that he wanted genius. O boys and girls, there never was a

greater blunder. Do not fancy for a moment that Washington was a commonplace, second-rate, dull man, who simply did his duty in a dogged way, and rose to eminence because his country was great and his enemies were fools. He had genius—the genius of a ruler—of a king of men; the mighty art by which, at intervals in the history of the world, one royal soul after another has caused other souls to seek him, to defer to him, to yield to him, to obey him, to give up their destiny to his will. This art of government is a specific gift as completely as Reynolds's painting, or Burke's oratory, Cowper's poetry, or Haydn's music, or Watt's invention. Like every one of these, it may be studied, practised, cultivated; it is helped by opportunity, by daring, by prudence; but when we come to the last analysis, we feel that some men, some women, we might say some boys and girls, are born leaders, and bound to lead, unless jealousy and crime deliberately shuts them in or cuts them off, because their natural power is recognized and dreaded. They may be great as soldiers, they may be orators, they may be statesmen, or they may have little or no success in these arts; but they will show the power of making the greatest soldiers and orators and statesmen do their work, and set their diadems firmer on their heads. The best of these leaders includes the greatest friends and the greatest enemies of mankind; it includes tyrants and it includes heroes. But the emphatic name, lord of men, given by

Homer to his great chief, who was not the strongest nor the bravest, nor the wisest in his army, is one which marks an independent quality, as much as a sculptor's or a navigator's. A blessing or a curse to mankind, according as he who has it rules for himself and his favorites or for his people and his God. You may all see at this moment two men in Europe who are maintaining their positions against every kind of enmity open and secret, because they have a genius for ruling. Envy and hatred themselves cannot deny that Bismarck and Gladstone have the gift of control — the power that sets one man above other men; and, unless I am very much mistaken, it will be recognized, and recognized before very long, by those who do not know it now, that the United States is under the management of one of these born rulers, — our, wise, fearless, noble, patriotic President Cleveland.

It seems to me no one who reads Washington's life attentively can doubt that he had this power. It is on the very face of history that men the most opposite in all respects consulted him, confided in him and submitted to him, simply because they had a feeling that his way must be the right way, and his authority was with them more than mere wisdom or experience. These were no inferior men whom he had to deal with. Franklin and Adams, Jefferson and Hamilton, Jay and Marshall, Greene and Knox, Lafayette and Gallatin were not men who easily accept another

man as their leader and yield their judgment to his. They were men of rare independence of character—leaders of men themselves, who won renown and honor in stations of government. Yet every one of them felt honored by recognizing him as their leader; and the army, the country, the distinguished men who came to us from abroad, the wise and great in every land to whom they sent back the tale; the heart of mankind which feels when a great man is born into the world, recognized with tears of joy and gratitude that God had raised up another prophet to lead Israel out of captivity.

It was well that it was so. It was better that America should give birth to a king of men in her hour of agony, than that she should have Mozart or Goethe born to her. In this year, 1886, it is especially important for us to remember this. This is the centennial year of America's darkest and saddest hour. In 1786, my dear children, your dear country and mine had sunk lower in the world's opinion than ever she did before or since. The thirteen States were quarrelling with each other and among themselves; the grand impulses with which they had rushed to Lexington and Princeton and Eutaw and Yorktown was all expended; they could not pay their just debts to Europe, whose generosity had helped them through the war, nor even to their own soldiers, whose courage had won it. They stood before the world discredited and abased, and men were



watching to see England and France and Spain swoop down like eagles on their bloodless carcasses and divide the plunder among themselves. It was absolutely necessary to do something, to do it strongly, and to do it soon. What was wanted was a national government, a central power throughout the whole country, informing every citizen in it, and every nation outside of it, that the United States made one people, and as one people would make their just will felt, both at home and abroad.

But this government was just what many Americans were afraid of. They thought liberty was the only thing worth having; they thought liberty could do everything; that it was the only good thing, and that everything that hindered liberty was bad. They had for a moment forgotten that there was another thing which makes a people great, and that is law, the law that takes away a part of liberty to keep the rest from being lost in tyranny.

But Americans at this time were terribly afraid of anything like a law for the whole Union; they could think of nothing but freedom, and for that they were prepared to sacrifice prosperity and honesty. They smelt the poison of tyranny in every government. They fancied that if they elected rulers they would make themselves kings, blazing with gold and fenced with steel, buying up every base man and killing every good man in their lust for power. I must be allowed to say that some of the most distinguished Americans of the time — Patrick Henry, for instance, whose

burst about liberty pretty much every boy here has declaimed — talked a monstrous deal of nonsense on this matter. They said if you have a general government you must put one man at the head of it, and that man will become a tyrant. “No,” said the friends of government, “we shall put George Washington at the head of it; he cannot become a tyrant, and no one after him will dare to.” It was the true answer, and it was enough. It was felt that the disgrace and misery of 1786 must not be repeated. In 1787, the wisest men of the country met in convention to form a Constitution for the United States. It went out under Washington’s signature, and his authority carried it through against the boldness of villains, the craft of knaves and the terrors of fools, and, what is harder to conquer than all three, the quibblings of men who have some goodness, some honor and some sense, but who would pick to pieces any plan, though an angel from heaven proposed it. The fact that Washington believed in the Constitution, and that he was there to be the first President, was an argument in its favor that all the genius of Hamilton, all the wisdom of Madison, all the virtue of Jay could not equal.

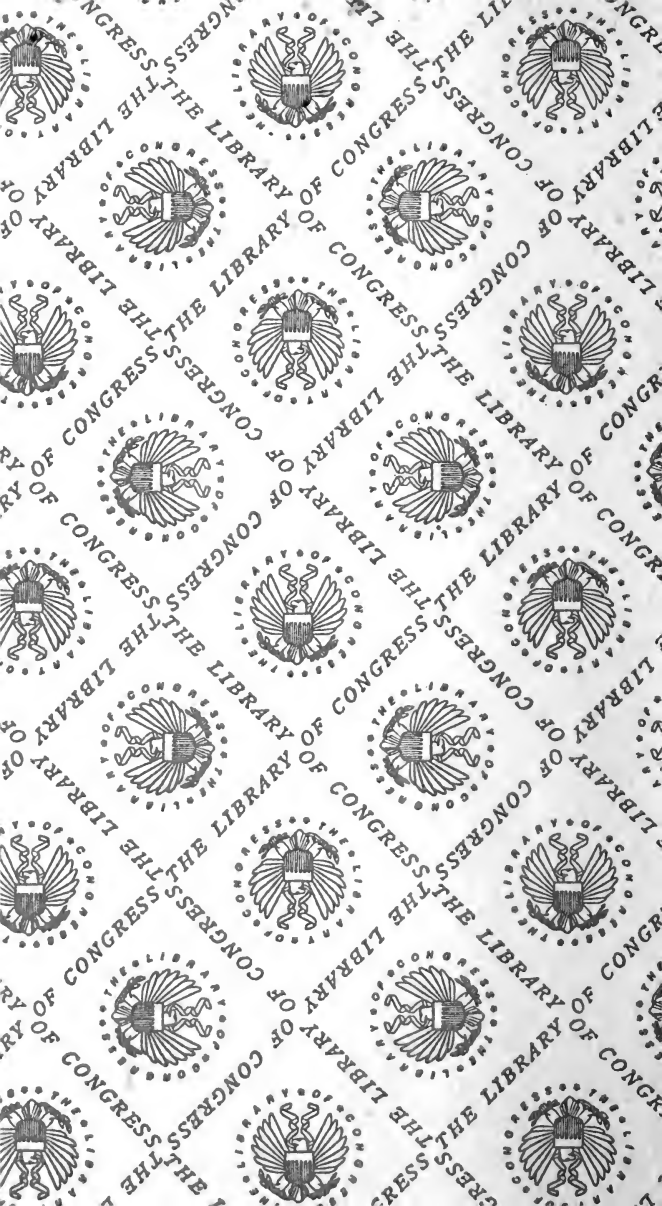
It was adopted; he was chosen; our country came up from the depths and stood on her feet; and it was having him at her head that did it. No liberty and no law, no enterprise and no patience, no courage and no religion will of themselves make a nation unless there are men to lead; and in terri-

ble times, when the bravest falter and the truest doubt, there needs one great man to whom all may look as to the oracles of God. The people must have a man in whom the honor and strength of their nation is concentrated; a man to lead their charge onward, like Washington, when he leaped the wall at Princeton, bursting on the startled British like a hunter on his game:—a man to hold them firm in a well-chosen position, like Washington, when he held the British pent within the lines of Boston, weakening and wasting them simply by standing still:—a man, it may be, to bid his people fall back from a wrong done in rashness and folly, retreating to the firm ground of honor and virtue, like Washington, when, on his first campaign, he abandoned the fortress of the Great Meadows.

Our constitution declares that any American man may rise to be a ruler in the land; it may be that before many years, though I do not see it, the American women will rise and declare they shall be rulers, too—if they want to be they certainly will. But this I say to you, dear boys and girls, from whom our rulers are to come,—whatever rights and opportunities the law may give, no man is fit to be a ruler of his country who does not model himself, first, last and always, on the greatest of all who ever bore that mighty name, the Father of his Country, the Friend of Mankind, the Servant of God, the Saint and Hero, George Washington!

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